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Drawing Amendments:

Request is hereby made for entry of the drawing amendments shown in red on the attached annotated sheet in Figs. 6B and 7. These include a showing of electrical power provided beneath the headliner and to accessory 210 as shown at 222a in Fig. 6B, as well as the addition of reference numerals 241 showing the attachment elements for electrically powered accessories 240 in Fig. 7, and reference numeral 239 for the electrical conductor. A replacement drawing sheet showing these changes is also attached.

Review, approval and entry of these drawing amendments is respectfully requested.

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REMARKS

Receipt of the Office Action mailed December 5, 2006, in the above identified patent application is respectfully acknowledged.

Claims 47-49, 51-60, 62-114, 116-124, 126-144 and 146-172 remain in the application. Claims 1-46 have been previously cancelled. Claims 47, 49, 52, 53, 56, 62, 73, 82-85, 90, 94, 106, 112, 114, 116-118, 120, 137, 142, 144, 146-149, 151, 167 and 172 were elected for prosecution in the Response of August 24, 2006. Claims 47, 83, 112 and 142 have been amended herein. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments to the drawings, specification and claims, as well as the following Remarks is respectfully requested.

The Rejection of Claims 47-172 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Applicants acknowledge the continuation of the rejection that Applicants' claims are unduly multiplied. Applicants understand that this rejection is being maintained in order to preserve Applicants' right to appeal this determination as set forth in the MPEP, although Applicants have previously presented a list of 30 claims for prosecution including claims 47, 49, 52, 53, 56, 62, 73, 82-85, 90, 94, 106, 112, 114, 116-118, 120, 137, 142, 144, 146-149, 151, 167 and 172.

Objections to the Drawings

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings as not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims.

In response, Applicants have submitted proposed drawing amendments to Figs. 6B and 7 and, in addition, refer the Examiner to various portions of the specification as originally filed or which have been amended and which provide support and showings of the features specified in the claims.

With respect to the attachment element in claim 47, Applicants have added reference numeral 241 to Fig. 7 showing the attachment element for the electrically powered accessories 240, such as map lights.

The electrical conductor of said at least one elongated member in claims 47 and 84 is shown at 236 in Fig. 7. In the description of Fig. 7 at pages 12 and 13, it is noted that power strip 230 can be arranged in a number of orientations and is proximate to one of the side edges of the window opening when attached to the interior surface of the window panel such that a power cord isthmus 236 may extend thereto in a cosmetically pleasing

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fashion. Such power cord isthmus 236 supports the language “said attachment member comprising at least one elongated member, said at least one elongated member comprising an electrical conductor” since the power cord isthmus leads to and is a portion of the electrical conductor.

In addition, the description of Fig. 7 refers to an elongated member or track having a channel within which are received one or more electrically powered accessories 240 such as map lights. Accessories 240 are received and attached within channel 236 and are preferably moveable to any one of a number of positions within the channel to suit the need of an operator in a manner like that of track lighting in buildings. Track lighting is commonly known to provide an electrical conductor extending therealong and Applicants have now inserted a reference number 239 referring to such electrical conductor.

Support for the language “cooperates with said attachment member disposed at the roof portion in a manner that readily facilitates detachment of the vehicle interior accessory component for exchange or for substitution by another” in claims 47, 112 and 142 is provided by the various showings Figs. 3A-3E and the related portions of the specification describing a variety of fastening techniques for securing the accessories set forth in the specification to the roof or headliner or the surface of the window panel. As noted in the specification at page 6, lines 2-8, the accessories used with this invention can include various structures including storage compartments, lamps, power strips, information displays and other items. All of the fastening techniques described in the specification beginning at page 6, line 24 through page 9, line 10, and the related drawings 3A-3E provide support for such attachments. Specifically, Figs. 3A and 3B and the related description in the specification show fastening techniques that allow detachment when desired. In addition, as set forth below, Applicants have added appropriate language to the specification and the paragraph at page 6, line 24, through page 7, line 13, stating that the fastening technique in Fig. 3A is a hook and loop arrangement 66a that facilitates detachment by allowing an exchange or substitution of compartments to be made quickly and easily without the use of a tool. The fastening technique of Fig. 3B similarly facilitates detachment without the use of a tool. Others of the fastening techniques described in the specification do the same. Such drawing figures and specification description also support the language of claims 62 and 142 relating to exchange or substitution by another achieved without recourse to use of a tool.

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In addition, a conductor 222a concealed from view by a headliner is now shown in Fig. 6B and supports the language of claim 94. As set forth in the specification at page 13, lines 10-16 and in the amendment of that paragraph in the Preliminary Amendment filed November 21, 2003, in this application, each of the embodiments of the vehicle interior accessory system described in the specification can be provided with either a local power source or a remote power source through a conductor. Wire conductors may be concealed by the vehicle accessory and headliner. Such a conductor concealed by the headliner is now shown in Figs. 6B and the related description set forth above. Accordingly, the language of claim 94 is supported by the showing in amended Fig. 6B.

Objections to the Specification

The Examiner also objected to portions of the specification as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. In response, Applicants have amended the specification at page 1 to refer to the abandoned status of application Serial No. 10/314,560.

At pages 6 and 7, Applicants have amended the description of the fastening technique shown in Fig. 3A to state that if a different storage compartment configuration is desired, the hook-and-loop arrangement 66A facilitates detachment by allowing an exchange or substitution of compartments to be made quickly and easily without the use of a tool. Such amendment and other fastening techniques described in the specification support the language in claims 62 and 142 and similar claims.

With respect to the language "accessory component including an attachment element" of claim 47 and similar claims, the amendments to the description of Fig. 7 at pages 12 and 13 refer to another accessory or accessory component comprising a power strip 230. See also page 6, lines 2-8 of the specification. Further, the power strip 230 provides an attachment member for accessories and includes an elongated member or track having a channel 238 within which are received one or more electrically powered accessories 240, such as map lights and the like, providing attachment elements 241.

Based on these amendments, and the other amendments to the specification as set forth above in the explanation in response to the drawing objections, the language of the claims is now supported and shows the claimed elements in the drawings. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections to the specification and drawings is respectfully requested.

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The Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner has rejected all of the thirty claims selected for prosecution in the present application as being anticipated by Dutta 5,599,086. However, Applicants have now further amended the main claims 47, 83, 112, and 142 and, as amended, it is respectfully submitted that the claims elected for prosecution are not anticipated by or made obvious by Dutta '086 and are, therefore, allowable.

As amended, Applicants' claim 47 defines a vehicle interior accessory system suitable for use in a vehicle having an interior cabin, the interior cabin having a roof and at least one of front and rear seating portions, the system comprising an attachment member disposed at a portion of the roof of the interior cabin so as to be overhead at least one of the front or rear seating portions within the interior cabin of the vehicle, the vehicle comprising one of an automobile, truck and a van and a utility vehicle. The remainder of the system is as previously defined in claim 47 and includes a vehicle interior accessory component including an attachment element for receipt by the attachment member. The attachment element of the accessory component cooperates with the attachment member to detachably secure the vehicle interior accessory component at the roof portion while the attachment member comprises at least one elongated member comprising an electrical conductor. Electrical power is provided to the electrical conductor of the elongated member while the attachment element of the vehicle interior accessory component cooperates with the attachment member disposed at the roof portion in a manner that readily facilitates detachment of the accessory component for exchange or substitution by another.

Claim 83 now includes similar amendments to those set forth above for claim 47 but further defines the elongated member as being oriented either longitudinally or transverse of the long axis of the vehicle with the accessory component being selectively positionable along the elongated member while the accessory component is provided with electrical power via an electrical conductor.

Claim 112 also includes amendments similar to those set forth above for claim 47 and states that the accessory component is selectively positionable along the at least one elongated member and provided with electrical power via the electrical conductor of the at least one elongated member.

Claim 142 also includes amendments similar to those in claim 41 as set forth above and further states that the attachment element of the accessory component cooperates

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with the attachment member in a manner that readily facilitates detachment of the vehicle interior accessory component for exchange or for substitution by another, the exchange or substitution by another being achieved without recourse to use of a tool.

A review of Dutta '086 indicates that it does not include an attachment member for a vehicle interior accessory component that is disposed overhead of at least one of a front or rear seating portion within a vehicle. Rather, Dutta '086 discloses a vehicle lighting system positioned above a side window of a vehicle as is clearly shown in Figs. 1-3 of Dutta. Indeed, Dutta states that illuminators 24 of the Dutta system maintain a desired illumination angle with the angle of the beam pattern maintained substantially transverse to the seating positions. See Dutta '086 at column 3, lines 22-29.

Moreover, Dutta does not disclose a vehicle interior accessory component cooperating with an attachment member disposed at the roof portion of the interior cabin of the vehicle overhead the at least one seating portion to detachably secure the vehicle interior accessory component at the roof portion in a manner that facilitates detachment of that accessory component for exchange or substitution by another.

The Examiner states that Dutta discloses accessory component 24 with attachment element 48 and electrical conductors 50, 52 wherein detachment is readily facilitated by the reverse of assembly, i.e., removing element 48 from the end of track 18. Further, the Examiner asserts that removing the element from an end of the track requires only a hand manipulation. This statement concerning the disclosure of Dutta '086 is respectfully traversed for the reason no such specifics are disclosed in Dutta. Rather, all that Dutta states is that track 18 comprises a G-shaped channel cross section and that opening 46 receives a slide portion 48 of illuminator 24. A careful review of Dutta '086 fails to show any disclosure wherein illuminator 24 is received in an end of track 18 or that removal from an end of the track requires only hand manipulation. Rather, Dutta '086 shows switches 26 mounted at each end of track 18 which turn on power to illuminator 24. There is no disclosure of how illuminators 24 are removed from the end of track 18. To the contrary, it would appear that ends 26 would require some type of disassembly which may well include the use of tools, to separate those ends from track 18. Even then, Dutta does not state that illuminator 24 is removed from an end of its track. The method of removal of illuminator 24 is simply not stated in Dutta and is respectfully submitted to be mere speculation.

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Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Dutta '086 does not disclose the vehicle interior accessory system disposed at a roof portion of the interior cabin of a vehicle overhead at least one of front and rear seating portions within the vehicle or including the other details for detachable securement or cooperation between the attachment element and attachment member facilitating detachment for exchange or substitution by another accessory component in the manner defined in Applicants' amended claims. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Dutta '086 does not anticipate Applicants' vehicle interior accessory system as set forth in these claims.

The same is true with respect to claim 62 wherein Dutta does not disclose the exchange or substitution by another being achieved without recourse to use of a tool. As above, disassembly of the Dutta system would appear to require the use of tools for removal of ends 26 to allow access to the ends of track 18, even if access to the track ends allowed removal of illuminator 24. Moreover, there is no disclosure of how removal of illuminator 24 from track 18 in Dutta is intended to take place.

Similar arguments apply to claim 142 which, likewise, defines cooperation between the attachment member and accessory component for exchange or substitution by another accessory component without recourse to use of a tool.

With respect to claim 94, it is respectfully submitted that there is no disclosure or showing the Dutta that any of its conductors are hidden by the headliner at the ends of the track. In Applicants' claim 94, a conductor is concealed from view by a headliner of the vehicle in combination with the remainder of the system as defined in claim 83. Dutta simply fails to disclose the concealment of a conductor in the manner defined by Applicants in their overall system as set forth in claim 94.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of the thirty claims elected for prosecution including the amendments set forth herein should be withdrawn as not being anticipated by Dutta '086.

The Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner also rejects the thirty elected claims as being unpatentable over Dutta '086 in view of Harwood 4,591,957. The Examiner suggests that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill to include a conventional attachment element 104 as shown in Harwood for a track light in order to attach and remove the light to the track by rotation without tools in the lighting system of Dutta '086. The Examiner also states that routing

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conductors beneath a headliner is common knowledge in the art, and is obvious to use in Applicants' present vehicle interior accessory system for both aesthetic and safety reasons.

For the reasons expressed above, it is respectfully submitted that Dutta '086 does not disclose or suggest Applicants' vehicle interior accessory system disposed at a roof portion of the interior cabin of a vehicle overhead at least one of the front or rear seating portions within the vehicle. Further, as set forth above, Dutta does not disclose cooperation between an attachment element and attachment member to allow detachable securement of the accessory component at the roof portion in a manner readily facilitating detachment of that accessory component for exchange or substitution by another.

The lighting distribution system of Harwood '957 does not complete the lack of disclosure missing from Dutta '086 such that Applicants' amended claims are unpatentable based on obviousness. Harwood '957 discloses a lighting track 30 in which a contact bar 104 aligned with slot 110 in track 30 to insert the bar in the track and then to rotate lug 108 and the bar 104 carried by lug 108 thereby to effect electrical contact engagement of opposed end zones 98 and 100 of bar 104 with corresponding operating conductors 114, 116 in track 30.

However, there is no basis to combine the non-automotive lighting distribution system of Harwood with the vehicle track lighting system of Dutta, especially to arrive at Applicants' invention. As noted above, the Dutta system includes track 18 with a G-shaped channel cross section and opening 46 to receive slide portion 48 of illuminator 24. There is no disclosure in Dutta as to how illuminator 24 is specifically assembled with the G-shaped channel of track 18, and especially no basis to conclude that a rotation of a bar 108 and lug 104 as disclosed in Harwood would allow any type of assembly of the illuminator 24 in Dutta. Rather, it is respectfully submitted that the G-shaped channel in track 18 of Dutta is for the specific purposes outlined therein for use in vehicles and that the track and light system of Harwood would not be specifically usable therewith. Given the lack of suggestion for use of the Harwood lighting elements in the track of Dutta, it is respectfully submitted there is no basis for combining Harwood with Dutta and that even if so combined the invention of the present application as set forth in the amended claims 47, 83, 112 and 142 would not result.

With respect to claim 94, which defines a conductor concealed from view by the headliner or the vehicle, the Harwood reference does not disclose a lighting distribution system useful in vehicles and provides no suggestion or disclosure for including a conductor

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concealed by the headliner of a vehicle nor any suggestion or motivation for concealing a conductor by a headliner as set forth in Applicants' amended claim 94. Likewise, as set forth above, Dutta '086 fails to disclose electrical conductors concealed by a headliner as defined by Applicants in their system. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 94 is not disclosed or suggested by Dutta '086, nor Harwood '957, nor their combination. Further, it is respectfully submitted there is no basis for combining the dissimilar systems shown in these references and that Applicants' invention would not result even if those references were somehow combined.

Summary

Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the thirty elected claims as amended herein are now in condition for allowance and are fully supported by the drawings and specification of this application including the above amendments. Entry of the above amendments and the amended drawing figures along with a Notice of Allowance for the thirty elected claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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